



Gifford Park's Pride

Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn and Play

October 1999

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

GPNA Fall Clean-up Is October 23rd

The date for this year's annual GPNA Fall Clean-up is **Saturday, October 23**, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Gifford Park. As usual, the Fall Clean-up is for GPNA members only, or people who donate their time or money to the clean-up. There will be dumpsters for hauling trash, a membership and donation drive, scrap metal recycling, Halloween pumpkins, and a park picnic for the helpers. Volunteers are needed to provide pickup trucks for hauling, assisting in packing and monitoring dumpsters, and helping to make pickups. The clean-up day is a great time for everyone in the neighborhood to take a look around their yards and streets and pick up trash and other debris. The net effect is a nicer looking neighborhood - one that we can all be proud of.

PLEASE NOTE: It is very important for you to call the phone numbers listed below **BEFORE** the day of the clean-up if you need a volunteer to pick up trash - we will prioritize hauling based on your call. The following items **WILL NOT** be accepted: tree brush, appliances containing refrigerant (freon), and tires - save them for the Spring Clean-up. If you have excessive trash (i.e. several truckloads) we may request a small donation to help defray the cost of dumpster rental. Please call **Mike (341-8224)**, **Chris (342-6006)**, **Terry (342-2795)**, or **Leo (345-1433)** for more information or if you can assist with the cleanup.



Kids of the Gifford Park Neighborhood:

Have a safe and happy Halloween!

See Page 4 for information about the PKA Fraternity Haunted House!

Next Meeting

**Thursday, October 7
7:00 P.M.**

**Guest Speaker:
Donald Carey
Omaha Police Chief**

**St. Joseph's Hospital
Seminar Room
(next to Gift Shop)**

NOTE CHANGE IN LOCATION!

"Take Back 33rd Street" Movement Underway

"Take Back 33rd Street", a cooperative effort of residents and non-resident owners sponsored by the GPNA, is an attempt to tackle the problem of illegal activity that has been occurring along 33rd Street between Cass and Burt Streets. This area has seen an increase in drug dealing activity recently, and this movement is an effort to make the area unattractive to drug dealers. Awareness by residents is the key to the success of this project; neighbors are being asked to pay attention to what is happening around their neighborhood and report suspicious or illegal activity either directly to the police or to the GPNA. Fliers and incident report forms have been distributed to residents in this area. The incident reports are designed to help residents note the information that is important in investigating these situations. These anonymous reports can be delivered or mailed to the GPNA office at 530 North 33rd St. GPNA volunteers will study these reports and will communicate with police as needed. Non-resident owners whose properties are involved in any way in drug sales will be contacted. The GPNA will take the issue of neighborhood drug activity to the City and advocate for whatever help is needed to put an end to it. The underlying message to the neighbors of this area is: **It's your street. Take it back!**

GPNA OFFICERS**PRESIDENT**

Chris Foster 342-6006

VICE PRESIDENT

Brad Bogard 342-2520

RECORDING SECRETARY

Jean Peck 344-0722

TREASURER

Sandy Saner 341-8939

COMMITTEE CHAIRS**ADVERTISING**

Dar Sweazy 345-0125

CLEAN-UP

Mike Wilwerding 341-8224

COMPLIANCE

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

COURTESY

Candy Bacom 933-7506

GRAFFITI

Maureen Calabro 345-7238

HISTORIAN

Eva Swanson 345-1707

MEMBERSHIP

Chris Foster 342-6006

NEWSLETTER

Sue Wilwerding 342-2795

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Mike Bacom 933-7506

PARK

Roger Freeman 557-2914

PARKING VIOLATIONS

Terry Wilwerding 342-2795

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Leo Wilwerding 345-1433

TOOL LENDING

Tom Rose 932-6191

WATCH GROUP

Mike Wilwerding 341-8224

WEEDS & LITTER

Jim Wilwerding 551-1344

KELLOM SCHOOL LIAISON

Dana Carlton 346-4575

Editor's note: If you have something that would be of interest to our neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for our monthly newsletter. Editorials must be approved by the GPNA Executive Board. Articles can be left at the GPNA Office; please include your name and phone number. Contact Sue Wilwerding (342-2795) or Chris Foster (342-6006) for information regarding the newsletter.

From the Desk of the President

Omaha Police Chief Donald Carey will be our guest speaker at the October 7th GPNA general meeting at St. Joseph Hospital. He spoke to our neighborhood association one year ago. At that meeting Chief Carey shared his vision of a more efficient operation including more police officers on the streets. Also at that meeting there were questions and comments from those attending about getting more police presence and enforcement around 33rd & California and 33rd & Webster because of the history of criminal activities. As much as anything residents complained about quality of life issues because they didn't feel safe living, walking and even driving in these areas of our neighborhood. Over the last year the 33rd Street area has seen some improvements, some setbacks, and unfortunately, too many problems that remain unchanged. The GPNA has made the 33rd Street area one of its top priorities because of the public safety concerns shared by both GPNA members and non-members. Why has this been such a struggle? Can anything be done?

Let me try to answer these questions with a summary of a September 22nd meeting attended by Northeast Police Precinct Captain Pitmon Foxall, Lt. Dan Komor, Deidra Andrews (Community Resource Center), Sgt. Cathy Cook (Metro Unit), and GPNA members Brad Bogard, Loren Johnson, Jim Wilwerding, Betsy Noble, Mel Beckman, Leo Wilwerding and myself. The meeting, requested by the GPNA, was held at the Northeast Precinct and lasted two hours. We shared our concerns with Captain Foxall, and following is a brief summary of items discussed. Captain Foxhall reported the precinct boundaries are currently being reconfigured and should be done by year's end – this could possibly mean more officers patrolling our area. We specifically asked for a beat patrol officer – this request was turned down at this time due to lack of resources (police officers). We asked that officers park their patrol cars in high profile areas when filling out reports; this could provide some police presence in problem areas. We asked the police to provide more timely communication of information and be more accessible – we were given names and phone numbers of police personnel responsible for our neighborhood. We asked for better response time to answer 911 calls, including drug dealing, loud parties, underage drinking, etc. – again, low resources and police union contract language were reasons given for response time concerns.

But police alone can't solve the problems. There are things we all can do to improve our neighborhood. The GPNA is currently involved with the following efforts: Contacting city prosecuting attorneys and judges to put more teeth into stiffer sentencing to keep criminals off our streets - we are finding out proper procedures for using a community impact statement against suspected or convicted criminals. Some of you may have seen the "TAKE BACK 33rd STREET" flyer that was recently delivered to residents and mailed to non-resident property owners along 33rd Street. The GPNA has a property owner's list of most of our neighborhood's property – we have found contacting owners directly when criminal activities and code violations occur is fairly successful in solving problems. Let us know if you would like us to contact a property owner – we need specific information to pass onto the owner. And the GPNA is always looking for new ideas for youth programs to involve kids in the community – they are our future leaders.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that to solve neighborhood problems

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From the Desk of the President . . .

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requires cooperation and hard work from police, government, businesses, institutions, neighborhood association and residents. Anything worthwhile takes time and sometimes risk, and it's not always convenient. I want to share with you a few examples of GPNA people taking a risk and making a real difference. **Loren Johnson**, owner of **J'N'J Grocery**, has, a number of times, attended court hearings to be a witness against accused criminals. **Brad Bogard**, owner of **California Tacos** and current GPNA vice-president, recently delivered the "TAKE BACK 33rd STREET" flyers to properties along 33rd Street, even in the face of street thugs. **Betsy Noble**, resident near 36th & Davenport, spread information to neighbors and police about drug and burglary activities this summer - her persistent efforts eventually lead to arrests a few weeks ago. And finally, the efforts over the years of the GPNA Watch Group, particularly **Harry Dirgo**, **Terry Wilwerding**, **Mike Wilwerding**, **Ron Yates** and **Mike Caban** - your countless hours watching our neighborhood streets is nothing short of remarkable, and your efforts are truly appreciated.

I want to conclude this month's message by offering a challenge to everyone to help make the Gifford Park neighborhood a better place by doing any of the following: attend neighborhood meetings, participate on the Watch Group, start a neighborhood watch on your block, call 911 and Mayor's Action Line (444-5555) when appropriate, pick up trash on your block, become a member of the GPNA, encourage neighbors to get involved, and most of all get to know your neighbors.

by Chris Foster



What's Happening in the Neighborhood . . .

The GPNA would like to thank **Kathy Leinenkugel**, Lead Program Coordinator for the Douglas County Health Department, for addressing the September general meeting. Her program was very interesting and full of important information concerning lead poisoning.

The GPNA was very sorry to hear about a serious car accident near St. Joseph, Missouri, that resulted in injuries to **Kent** and **Ross Windorski**, sons of past GPNA president **Jim Windorski** and his wife **Ruth**. Our thoughts are with you, Jim and Ruth, and our hope is for your sons' rapid recovery.

The GPNA also sends wishes for a speedy recovery to long time neighborhood resident **Sylvia McCoy**. Sylvia is the mother of past GPNA President **Ron Yates** and has been recuperating from a recent illness. Another GPNA long-time member "on the mend" is **Tom Rose**, who is recovering from a recent surgery. Best wishes, Tom!

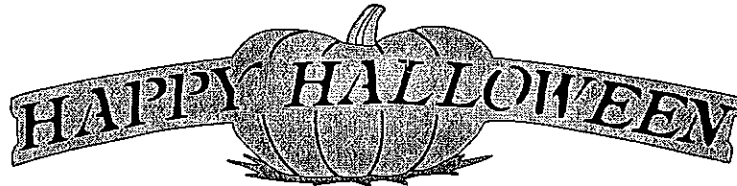
The GPNA sends its sincere condolences to the family of **Marjorie Porter**, who passed away on August 28th. Marjorie was the aunt of GPNA Vice-President **Brad Bogard** and sister of **Tom Bogard**. Marjorie worked at Bogard's Drug Store (now California Taco) on 33rd and California until moving to Circleville, Ohio in the 1950's.

Saturday Night Alive, a contemporary jazz worship service every third Saturday, will be held **Saturday, October 16**, at **5:00 p.m.** at **Augustana Lutheran Church, 38th and Lafayette**. The service blends the spirituality of jazz with the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.. Come to worship and stay afterwards for a light meal gathering. For information, call Augustana at **551-4728** or E-mail the church at **augustan@novia.net**. Upcoming service dates are **November 20** and **December 18**.

A "Walk for Animals" to benefit the **Nebraska Humane Society** will be held **Sunday, October 17**, from **1 - 4 p.m.** in **Elmwood Park**. For more information, call **444-7800, ext. 351**.

GPNA Tennis Program Ends With Pizza

The 1999 GPNA Tennis Program was another big success, and to celebrate there was free pizza, pop, and dessert for all participants at the last lesson. Certificates were awarded to kids who attended all of the sessions. Pictured at the left are **Cynthia Saavedra** and **Erik Frey**, both 11 years old, who won the Sportsmanship Awards. According to program coordinator **Chris Foster**, the attendance averaged around 45 kids per session. The GPNA would like to thank **Godfather's Pizza** at **29th and Farnam** for donating the pizza and all the neighbors who contributed the bars and cookies.



5th Annual

PKA Fraternity
Haunted House

Where:
PKA House
3100 Chicago St.

FREE!



When:
Thursday, October 28th
Ages 10 & under: 6 p.m.
All ages: 7 - 9 p.m.

hosted by:

Pi Kappa Alpha (PKA) Creighton Fraternity

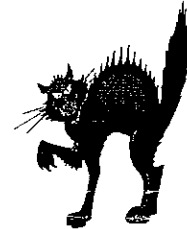
Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

All Neighborhood Children

And Parents Are Welcome to

Stop By For Refreshments

And Trick-or-Treats!



GIFFORD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

532 N. 33rd Street, Omaha, NE 68131

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please print clearly)



Membership year: _____ (Membership year runs from June 1 through May 31)

Type of membership: Single (\$5) _____ Family (\$8) _____ Business (\$25) _____

Name of business _____

Name _____ (Last) _____ (First)

Spouse _____ (Last) _____ (First)

Address _____ (Street) _____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip)

Telephone Number: _____ (Home) _____ (Work)

In case of an emergency notify: _____ (Name) _____ (Address) _____ (Phone No.)

May this information be included in the GPNA Neighborhood Directory? Yes _____ No _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Did You Forget....

to renew your GPNA membership for 1999-2000? Many of our members from last year have not renewed as of yet, and with the members-only Fall Cleanup this month, it's a great time to do so. Either send in your membership now, or drop it off at Gifford Park during the Clean-up. Thanks for your support!

For City Services,
Information, or
Complaints
Call:

Mayor's Action
Office
444-5555